

Athenian News :

O R,

Dunton's Dracle.

From Tuesday May the 23d, to Saturday May the 27th, 1710.

The Drunken-Post.

Drunkenness is a Vice so Epidemical among us, that I should think a Discourse on this Subject were altogether useless, unless the Satisfaction of speaking a seasonable Truth provok'd me to it.

In the Nonage of the World Men and Beasts had but one Battery, which was the Fountain and the River; but the Topers of this Age (or *drunken Posts*) think the best Alarm is sounding of Healths, and the most absolute March is Reeling. Hang *Scotus*, quo' these Bowzers, lead us to *Aristippus*; one Epitomy of his in Quarto is worth a Volume of these Dances. But of all Beasts none so great as—*A drunken Woman*—of which I could give many strange and amazing Instances. *Clero*, a Woman, was so practis'd in Drinking that she durst challenge all Men and Women whatsoever for the Mastery in Drinking, and overcome all.

'Tis wond'rous strange! that Women (who are said
To be the weaker Vessels) shou'd out-do
The Men (who mostly are much stronger made)
In drinking Ale, Beer, Wine, and Brandy too!
Some Women they shall drink ye Hogheads dry,
And live; some Men scarce Half so much, and die!
What shou'd the Reason be? ——— Why, this indeed:
Their Vessels they are weak,
And soon do spring a Leak.
Letting the Liquor out as fast as 'tis receiv'd.

What Words can prevail on Mankind, when such dreadful Appearances of Drunkenness can't? Or indeed what Person, tho' rose from the Dead on Purpose, can move them, who are obstinate, tho' they rise from the Dead, as it were, so often themselves? But before I proceed any further, I must observe the numerous Tribe of Proverbs we have in *English*, on Purpose to encourage this Vice. How many Songs praise it, and how many Catches are dedicated to its Divinity? The Wit of a Nation is generally known by its Proverbs, and ought that to be encourag'd amongst them which teaches Men to lose their Wits? Not only for the Time present, but by a long Habit, it wears off the Edge of Wit, and exhales Vapours, to cloud the Understanding.

But I must now come to the Thing propos'd. There needs no Definition where its Attendants are so odious, nor any Pieces of Philosophy to describe that which is so much beneath a Philosopher and a Man too.

*He that is drunken, may his Mother kill
Big with his Sister; he hath loos'd the Reins,
Is out-law'd by himself, all Kinds of Ill
Doth with his Liquor swim into his Brains.
The Drunkard forfeits Man, and doth divest
All Worldly Rights, save what he hath by Beast.*

Herbert.

Sacred Writ, as it gives the first Example, so it describes the fatal Consequences of Drunkenness; and the Heathens, when they found that every one in his Drink was was an Emperour, thought they could do no less than make a God of that Juice which had such powerful Operations. Such mistaken blind Zealots were they in Religion, to make Vice Virtue, and that Service worthy of a God which was unworthy of a Man.

The Dangers of Drunkenness may be divided into Two Parts, the outward and inward. The outward Dangers are so numerous and casual, that to reckon them all up would be absurd and impertinent. The Danger of being engag'd in deceitful Bargains, firing of Houses, &c. are enough to illustrate this Matter; but the inward Dangers are unhappy, tho' not so numerous as the other. How many Diseases flow from that vitious Fountain? How many are fed, and are nourish'd by it? The *Gout* in Particular is enough to terrify all Professors in that Art, which, as it is an Earnest of a long Life will be sure to bring Pain enough with it, so as to make a few Years seem an Age: But these Things being so well known, I had rather enquire into the Reasons of this Vice, of what Use it can be, or how it can suit with Nature. Refreshment after Labour is allow'd by all to be both wholesome and pleasant. Wine, as *Solomon* saith, maketh glad the Heart of Man; so that all agree in the Use of it, tho' few in the Measure of it. In my Opinion the pious Mr. *Herbert* seems to set the best Bounds for drinking, when he tells us, *the First Glass is for Refreshment, the Second for Pleasure, and the Third has Poison in it*; so judiciously did that Saint limit that universal Disease. Suppose we allow Three Glasses, which certainly cheer the Spirits, what more can be aim'd at in drinking? Some perhaps will object Company, that all Society will be

be spoil'd, and Business interrupted. With a many Advances above Three Glasses, his Head turns more and more, his Brains become disorder'd, and himself unfit for Business, so that certainly all Bargains can be best made, all Friendship best maintain'd, when the Spirits are elevated to their just Degree. Besides, Self-preservation is Nature's Law: Must you endanger your own Health and Constitution for good Fellowship only, and lose your Senses to enjoy that Company you have hardly Sense to perceive present?

Men might live (and that merrily too) without drinking, for as for Thirst we see it voluntarily suppress'd by divers; for there was a Roman General, call'd *Julio Viator*, who being in his Youth sick of a certain Corruption between the Flesh and the Skin, was forbidden to drink by the Physicians, using himself to which Abstinence a while, he kept it in his Age, without ever drinking any thing at all. It is easy for any Man to live Five or Six Days without drinking, if the Victuals he eats be cold and moist. I knew a Woman (says a Spanish Author) that made a Pastime to abstain from Drink Eight or Ten Days. There was a Man in *Medina del Campo* that staid usually Thirty or Forty Days without drinking a Drop, and longer, if it were in the Fruit-season; for with eating thereof he moisten'd so his Stomach that he had little Desire to drink any thing: But what *Pontanus* writeth in his Book of *Cælestial Things* causeth me to wonder a great deal more, of a Man that in all his Lifetime never drank at all: Which *Ladislaw*, King of Naples, hearing, made him per Force drink a little Water; which caus'd him to feel extream Pain and Torment in his Belly. But tho' Temperance in Drinking be a Virtue, and perhaps the best Physician, yet there is no Deceit in a Brimmer; for Wine was given to exhilarate the drooping Hearts, and raise the drowsy Spirits of dejected Souls. Is not the liberal Cup the Sucking-bottle of the Sons of *Plebus*, to solace and refresh their Palates in the Night of sad Invention? which made *Cowley* cry,

*The thirsty Earth soaks up the Rain,
And drinks, and gapes for Drink again.
The Plants suck in the Earth, and are
By constant Drinking, fresh and fair.
The Sea it self, which one wou'd think,
Shou'd have but little Need of Drink,
Drinks Ten Thousand Rivers up,
So fill'd that they o'erflow the Cup.
The busy Sun, (and one wou'd guess,
By's drunken fiery Face, no less)
Drinks up the Sea; and when he's done,
The Moon and Stars drink up the Sun.
They drink and dance by their own Light,
They drink and revel all the Night.
Nothing in Nature's sober found,
But an eternal Health goes round.
Fill up the Bowl, then fill it high,
Fill all the Glasses here, for why
Should ev'ry Creature drink but I?
Why, Man of Morals, tell me why?*

Then shall we think any Man can do amiss, in a fair friendly Round, to steep his Sorrows in a chirping Cup? The King of *Denmark*, (tho' he had the Repute of a sober Prince, yet) at feasting the Earl of *Leicester*, he drank Thirty Five Healths to all the Kings and Queens

in Christendom. *Alexander* so well knew the Force and Valour of Sack, that he said, None could be a good Commander that was not doubly Drunk with Wine and Ambition.

*Thus when the Bottle does the Brains refine,
It makes the Wit as sparkling as the Wine.*

Yet by the Leave of these bowzing Sentiments—*Wit procur'd by Wine*—is for the most part like the Sparklings in the Cup when 'tis filling, they brisk for a Moment, but die immediately; and for Drunkenness 'tis a beastly Vice. 'Tis true, he that is drunk is as great as a King, but 'tis only in his own Conceit, and often to his Ruin; and therefore I wish Courtesy would invent some other Custom of Entertainment. King *James I.* being ask'd what Punishment should be inflicted on a drunken Man, answer'd, *Let him be drunk again*; intimating that he could not have a worse Punishment. But I shall close up this serious Discourse with something more diverting: And now, Reader, as thou hast drunk off this first Glass for Advantage and Refreshment, I will offer you a second for Pleasure, and so conclude.

A Tale for the Men.

Kate was a fresh Complexion'd Country Dame,
Mild and good natur'd, and a Foe to Fame;
Domestick Toils employ'd each lingring Day,
Her fragrant Butter shew'd the rip'ning May,
But her chief Art in Cheshire Cheeses lay.

Dick had too soft a Hand to drive a Plough,
Would fain a Lord commence, but knew not how:
'Twas no great Task to swear, or break his Word,
But where's th' Estate that must support the Lord?
Ambition still possess'd his frantick Fate,
A Squire at least without a Squire's Estate:
He shuns his Wife like some portentous Sign,
And only kiss'd his Hounds with true Delight.
'Twas these he lov'd, 'twas these possess'd his Mind,
For Beasts to Fellow Beasts are still inclin'd.
But soon as Mists the Night's Approach declare,
Poor weary'd Dick does to the Town repair,
To wash away his Sense as well as Care.
There Nut-brown Ale his fainting Strength supplies,
And brisk October sparkles in his Eyes.

Oft as Boots drove his ponderous Wane,
And gave a bright Example to the Swain,
At the Sixth Mug he with his Sots was found,
And Royal Healths disgrac'd in every Round.
They rail'd at diff'rent Parties, yet meant none,
They wish'd no Dangers or of Church or Crown,
But by their Heads guess'd all was upside down.
At Light's Approach, like Ghosts, they leave the House,
And Dick must visit his implicit Spouse.

Unhappy Kate within her self complains,
And silent Sighs express her lab'ring Pains.
With fond Compliance she repeats her Love,
Glad if that Wound her Remedy can prove;
Yet talks in vain, for strait the Drunkard's found
In nappy Ale's and Sleep's wide Ocean drown'd.

Long this uncomfortable Life they led,
Nor Peace at Board, nor Pleasure in their Bed :
Poor Kate complain'd, alas ! but all in vain,
For Matrimony is too strong a Chain.

Patience at last, impatient of Delay
To get Redress, contriv'd it self a Way :
One only Babe, a lusty, hopeful Boy,
Was all which both in common did enjoy :
The poor Remains of Reason Dick possess'd,
Whatever Fity mov'd his savage Breast,
Here in its Light and true Perfection shone,
For in his Cups he lov'd his infant Son.

And now the artful Dame new Measures tries,
And knows that to be Sly is to be Wise.
The sleeping Child is to that Room convey'd,
Fam'd for the Labours of the Dairy-Maid :
There he in Silence wrap'd, and new Delight,
Avoids the Inclemencies of sickly Night.

Grimalkin next the Evening Farce supplies,
The Swadling hides her Legs, a Veil her Eyes,
And in the moving House supine she lies.
What secret Transports did the Lodging give !
A Nine-liv'd Cat, no Fable we believe ;
Yet now you'd think she first appear'd to live.

By Morning Light the Sot discovers Home,
Thrice Swears aloud, and thrice Reels round the Room.
The Wife new Courage takes, and Job's her Spouse,
Calls him a Beast, and rails at Dobson's House ;
Tells him his Fame thro' ev'ry Parish rung,
The filthy Burden of each Rhimer's Song,
And constant Guest to every Gossip's Tongue.
Hey day, cries he, a Female bellish Noise,
A body'd think I had a Hundred Boys :
But now I'll try, you proud obstreperous Fide,
This Stick shall break your Bones, or bruise your Head.
She saw him coming, and with eager Hast,
And eager Pleasure, to the Window past ;
Where to the House a Moat adjoining lies,
And circling Streams domestick Wants supplies.
The mournful Cat is plang'd into the Wave ;
Go now, says she, you Beast, your Darling save.
The Man amaz'd, new inward Transports feels,
No more he Faulters, and no more he Reels :
A sudden Fear dispos'd his troubled Brains,
And o'er the Drink a quick Ascendant gains :
The Room stood still, the Candle seem'd but One,
And all Penelope's long Labour was undone.
Himself half dead with Fear, the Cat pursues,
Nor does his Life for such Returns refuse.
And now with moving Arms he plows the Main ;
A Work 'till then unpractis'd by the Swain.
The Cat's in reach, and clasp'd with fast Embrace ;
But Fraud, at last, exhibits its naked Face.

He soon perceives the Trick, then Raves and Tears,
Vows deep Revenge, and to each Vow he Swears ;
Yet the brisk Flame by cooler Thoughts decays,
And fresh Reflections represent his Ways.

Kate, the mean while, beheld the Sight above,
Pleas'd the Event so suitable did prove.
You Swimmer there, says she, your Trade renew,
Get Drunk, you Sot, and stagger Home by Two :
But I'd advise you not provoke your Wife ;
Ev'ry Night Drunk ! a pretty sort of Life !
How stately like a Swan, my Dear, you sail'd ?
Roger himself in this Attempt had fail'd.

'Twas bravely done ; but what have you possess'd ?
A mewling Cat ; a very pleasant Jest !
Learn to be Wise, and chuse you better Fare,
Nor look what present Joys, but future are ;
You're a meer Beast when e'er you get your Can,
But Adam's Ale transforms you to a Man.

The Casuistical-Post, or Athenian Mercury.

Quest. Mr. Dunton — I have often read with great Satisfaction one of your 3000 Posts, which you call the Sibil-Post, or Ideal Kingdom : I perceive you have already planted the Colony of Fine Fancy, and are now planting the Colony of Odd Fancy, as I take it. M. Smith the Interloper, (or British Apollo) is an Inhabitant of that Colony, and for that Reason I did design to have ask'd him, Whither the Account we have of the Sibils be not a Fiction ? or if real, What is their Names, Number and Country ? But perceiving (by your last Oracle) that you are able to prove all his Answers dull, ignorant, false and impertinent, I shall no longer consult Smith's Oracle ; and therefore now desire Mr. Dunton's Answer to the foregoing Question concerning the Sibils, in which I hope you will not deny me, as I shall give a Light into your Sibil-Post, or Ideal Kingdom, which I perceive by those Sibil-Posts you have already publish'd, you design as a full Answer for all Ranks and Degrees of Men, but more especially for the Ladies ?

Ans. Tho' it be generally acknowledg'd that there were Sibils, yet as to their Names, their Number, their Country, and their Works, nay, the whole Story of them, all is full of Doubts and Uncertainties. The Etymology of the Greek Word signifies as much as the Will or Counsel of God ; the *Æolick* Dialect saying *Sion* instead of *Ibeou*. The *Chaldeans* call'd them *Sambetes*. They are cited, and consequently acknowledg'd by *Justin Martyr*, *Theophilus of Antioch*, *Athenagoras*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Tatian*, *Lactantius*, and other ancient Authors. *Varro*, and *Diodorus Siculus*, call them Women fill'd with Divinity, fore-telling Things to come, whence they came also to be call'd *Propheteesses*. Some conceive that they were before the War of *Troy*, and refer all their Predictions only to one of them, imagining that the same thing happen'd to them as had done to *Homer*, who, for his great Reputation, gave Occasion to several Cities of Greece, to attribute his Birth to them : In like manner as a great Number of Cities and Countries ; as for Instance, *Erythrae*, *Cuma*, *Sardin*, *Troy*, *Rhodes*, *Libya*, *Phrygia*, *Samos* and *Aegypt*, desirous to attribute to themselves the Birth of that Sibil, it came to be believ'd, that there were Ten of them. Amongst whom, *Martianus Capella*, grounding his Assertion upon very probable Conjectures, acknowledges but Two, *Erophila*, the *Trojan* Sibil, whom he affirms to be the same that others call the *Phrygian* and *Cumaean*, and the others *Symmaga*, call'd also *Erythrae*, at the Place of her Birth. *Pliny* affirms, that there were at *Rome* Three Statues of the *Sybils*, One erected by *Pacuvius Taurus* ; the other Two by *Marcus Valerius Messala*. The first of these Three, according to the Relation of *Solinus* in his *Polybistor*, was call'd *Cumana*, who prophesied at *Cuma* in the Fiftieth Olympiad, and had still her Temple at *Pouzols*, about a Hundred Years since, but was burn'd in a general Conflagration that happen'd there in the Year MDXXXIX. under the Ruins of which it was then bury'd ; so that there remains now only some subterraneous Places,

Places, into which a Man cannot go upright, yet still express a certain Divinity, in as much as those Reliques of a vast and spacious Structure, seem to be all cut out of one Stone. The Second was call'd the *Delphick Sibil*, and liv'd before the Wars of *Troy*. The Third is that *Eriphyla* of *Erythrae*, who prophesy'd at *Lesbos*. *Ælian* affirms, that there were Four, viz. the *Erythraean*, the *Samian*, the *Aegyptian*, and that of *Sardin*. To that Number others add Two, the *Judaick* and the *Cumæan*; but *Varro*, desirous to have yet more of them, adds Four, and makes them up Ten; of which Opinion is also *Onuphrius*.

Plato, in his *Theagines* affirms, That *Socrates* acknowledg'd them to be Prophetesses; and in his *Phædon*, the same *Socrates* shews, by their Example, that Extravagance or Distraction of Mind does many times bring great Advantages to Mankind. *Aristotle*, in the First Question of the Thirtieth Section of his Problems, affirms, That Women become Sibils when the Brain is over-heated, not by Sickness, but through a natural Distemper. And elsewhere he describes the subterraneous Palace of a Sibil, whom he affirms, according to the common Report of her, to have liv'd a long Time, and continu'd a Virgin. *Plutarch* in his Treatise, *Why the Prophetess Pythia renders not her Answers in Verse*, affirms, that by a particular Favour of God, a Sibil had spoken Things during the Space of a Thousand Years; and elsewhere, that she foretold the Destruction of several Cities that were afterwards swallow'd up, the Fire of Mount *Gibel*, and divers other Things, setting down near the Time when what she had said should come to pass. *Pausanias* affirms, that the Sibil *Herophila*, had certainly foretold the bringing up of *Helen* at *Sparta*, and that it should occasion the Destruction of *Troy*. *Justin*, having related what Account *Plato* made of Persons who foretold Things to come, who he says, deserve the Name of Divine, though they do not themselves comprehend the great and certain Things which they Predict, says, That that is to be understood of the Sibilline Verses: the Writers whereof, said he, had not the same Power as the Poets have, viz. that of correcting and polishing their Works; in as much as the Inspiration ceasing, they do not so much as remember what they had said, though some have been of Opinion, that the Agitation of Mind, wherewith they have prophesy'd, seem'd to be the Effect of the evil Spirit; producing, as a Confirmation of this Opinion, one of the Sibils, who says of herself, *That, for her enormous Crimes, she was condemn'd to the Fire*. Yet allowing these Verses to be rank'd among the Suppositious, there is still a greater Probability enclining us to judge otherwise of them, when we consider the good Instructions given us, and the Mysteries of our Salvation contain'd therein; it being not the Function of Devils and evil Spirits to encourage us to Piety. But however it be, this is clearly evinc'd, that there have been Sibils, and that they fore-told Things to come.

Q. Why Jesus Christ never gave Alms to the Beggars he healed?

A. That blind Man was poor, yea, and a Beggar, *John* 9. 8. Another blind Man whom our Lord cured, was also reduc'd to Beggary, *Mark* 10. 46. But Jesus Christ gave Alms, and one of the Apostles was the Dispenser of it, *John* 13. 29. But he caus'd no Alms to be given to those poor blind Men. Wou'd it

not have been a double Beneficence, if when he gave them Sight, he shou'd likewise have offer'd them wherewith to satisfy their Hunger? But as the best Actions are the most subject to Detraction, Jesus Christ cou'd have wanted no Adversaries who wou'd have disputed the Truth of the Miracle, saying, That it may be those Beggars were never Blind, but only feign'd to have been so, being hir'd with Money: And indeed, as to him that was born Blind, the *Jews* would not believe he had been so, 'till they were convinc'd it was so, *John* 9. 18, &c. To prevent their Blasphemies, Jesus Christ abstain'd from bestowing any Alms on those Beggars. St. Peter had neither Gold nor Silver when he caus'd him to walk who was born *Lame*, *Acts* 3. 6. But altho' that Apostle shou'd have had wherewith to shew himself liberal to that Beggar, 'tis likely his Prudence would have kept him from doing it, for the Cause aforesaid.

Q. Mr. Dunton, Pray let your Oracle resolve me, why the Scripture namesb not the Time, viz. the Year, or the Day, when Sin began?

A. In vain do Men undertake to know how much Time pass'd from the Creation of the Angels, to the Revolt of many of them; or how long *Adam* was in the State of Innocency. 'Tis not mention'd on what Day, nor at what Hour of the Day, nor yet in what Year Sin entred the World: 'Tis very likely, and that upon very strong Reasons, that *Adam* continu'd but very few Days in his primitive Integrity. Yet the History doth not name neither the Day nor the Year of his Fall, nor in what Age it was.

And as the Scripture never expresseth the total Sum of the Years of the Life of a wicked Man, as many have observ'd, so it would not mark the Time Sin was Born: Many Sins committed since, are there circumstanc'd by the Expression of the Time when they hapned; but the first Sin that produc'd all the others is there mention'd, without the least Designation of the Term of its Birth.

All the Conjecture which we can give thereof is this: The Scripture relating the Creation of the Works of God, hath distinguish'd them from those that are not of his making, and yet nevertheless hapned soon after the Creation. Now this is one of the Marks of that Distinction, that of all the Works of God, it is said on what Day they began to be; but the Day Sin was Born, is not mark'd in the Kalender of the Holy Ghost.

Yea, long after the Creation, the Scripture forbore to express the Year wherein *Cain* kill'd his Brother. That Silence hath many Causes, but we see but very few of them.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T S.

+++ *The Christian's Gazette, or News chiefly respecting the Invisible World; being a Pacquet for the pious Virtuosi on Subjects never started before. Written by John Dunton, Author of the Essay entitl'd The Hazard of a Death-Bed-Repentance. Price 1s. Sold by J. Morphew, near Stationers-Hall.*

*** *The Amorous War, or a Duel with the Passions, a Poem, in a Letter to a Friend. By a Gentleman of the University of Oxford. To which is added, the Defeat, or the Lover vanquish'd, and again rallying with a Smile. Sold by Tho. Darrack, Printer, in Peterborough-Court in Little-Britain, Price 2d.*

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